

May 13, 2003

Re: Media Ownership Proposal/Vote

To All Five Commissioners of the FCC:

I am wholly opposed to any lift on the restrictions to the 35% rule of media ownership. I also must register my complaint that the FCC has not done anything, as required by law, to inform the public of the proposal that has been on the table for well over a year, and it is only through personal investigation that some of the public, and even the congress, have been aware of it at all. It just so happens that I was a political science major and I have an intellectual interest in media operations and businesses, or I wouldn't be aware of this important upcoming vote in June. I request updates from media-watch organizations, as there is no coverage of this to speak of except on C-SPAN, and I watch news for more hours a day than any human being should. I don't want to have to depend on only one or two sources for such important information.

I request that the vote be postponed as requested by Commissioners Jonathan Adelstein and Michael Copps. The public has to know more about the planned sale of their airwaves.

I hereby register my opinion that conducting this vote, as planned, in June will constitute a robbery of the public trust, i.e., an illegitimate permit to sell off public airwaves that we, the public, did not even know were up for sale. Note that, as in the criminal sentencing of a "radio pirate" yesterday, people will be made criminals for putting programming on the air unless they are sanctioned by corporations or foundations. No one asked me or anyone else I know if we wanted that to happen, or if we wanted to have absolutely no corporate-free programming unless it is through powerful foundations. I support a public radio news service that has recently been getting televised as well, and already I cannot see it televised unless I purchase DirectTV, even though I have donated to the public radio service already. The government won't pay for my public radio or television, I pay for it, but now I still have to pay someone else to get access to it. I don't think that's legal.

Who gave you the right to keep public programming off the free airwaves? And now you want to do this even more intensely, while the nation's debt mounts and the FCC gives sweet deals to corporate media owners who are already wealthy, as has been done with fair regularity in the not-so-distant past?

I join with people of all political stripes who feel that there is too much corporate ownership of media, period. There are many negative consequences to purely corporate ownership of 99% of the media, not least of which is the resulting ignorance of events and attitudes around the rest of the world. At any rate, regardless of whether you think the media is doing a great or terrible job at educating viewers beyond purely entertaining them, corporations do not own the airwaves – the public does. Delay the vote, or prepare to be voted irrelevant in the next renaissance of alternative media.